

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 6, 17-18 are pending in this application. Please amend claims 6, and add new claims 17-18 as follows:

1. (Withdrawn) A functional bead comprising a coating layer on the surface thereof and having nanoparticles present in the coating layer.
2. (Withdrawn) The functional bead according to claim 1, wherein the bead is a bead made of a material selected from the group consisting of glass, silica gel, polystyrene, polypropylene, membrane, and magnetic material.
3. (Withdrawn) The functional bead according to claim 1, wherein the coating layer is produced by a dehydration condensation reaction of a metal alkoxide.
4. (Withdrawn) The functional bead according to claim 1, wherein the bead is plastic and the coating layer is produced by polymerizing a vinyl compound.
5. (Withdrawn) The functional bead according to claim 1, wherein the nanoparticle is a nanoparticle made of at least one material selected from the group consisting of metal, semiconductor, and metal compound.
6. (Currently Amended) A method for reading beads comprising the steps of:
 - introducing ~~functional~~ beads having a coating layer on ~~the surface~~ a surface thereof and having nanoparticles present in the coating layer to a flow path wherein a pair of electrodes are disposed so as to come into contact with the surface of the beads;
 - enabling the ~~functional~~ beads to emit light with a wavelength specific to the nanoparticles by applying a voltage to the ~~functional~~ beads in the flow path via the electrodes with which the beads have brought into contact, the voltage being applied to the electrodes; and
 - identifying the ~~functional~~ beads based on the emission.

7. (Withdrawn) A bead reading apparatus comprising:
 - a flow path to enable functional beads having a coating layer on the surface thereof and having nanoparticles present in the coating layer to pass therethrough;
 - a pair of electrodes provided in the midst of the flow path;
 - a power source to apply a voltage to the electrodes; and
 - a light-receiving element to capture light emitted from the functional beads, to which the voltage has been applied by the electrodes.
8. (Withdrawn) The bead-reading apparatus according to claim 7, comprising a magnetic belt for passing the functional beads through the flow path by magnetic force.
9. (Withdrawn) A method for reading beads comprising the steps of:
 - introducing functional beads having a coating layer on the surface thereof and having nanoparticles present in the coating layer to a flow path;
 - enabling the functional beads to emit light with a wavelength specific to the nanoparticles by irradiating the functional beads with an electromagnetic wave in the flow path; and
 - identifying the functional beads based on the emission.
10. (Withdrawn) A bead-reading apparatus comprising:
 - a flow path to enable functional beads having a coating layer on the surface thereof and having nanoparticles present in the coating layer to pass therethrough;
 - an electromagnetic wave source provided in the midst of the flow path; and
 - a light-receiving element to capture light emitted from the functional beads, which have been irradiated with the electromagnetic wave.
11. (Withdrawn) The bead-reading apparatus according to claim 10, comprising a magnetic belt for passing the functional beads through the flow path by magnetic force.
12. (Withdrawn) A functional bead according to claim 1, wherein a biopolymer is fixed on the surface of the functional bead.

13. (Withdrawn) A method for reading functional beads comprising the steps of:
- providing a bead-reading apparatus having a flow path to enable functional beads having a coating layer on the surface thereof and having nanoparticles present in the coating layer to pass therethrough, an electromagnetic wave source provided in the midst of the flow path, a light-receiving element to capture light emitted from the functional beads which have been irradiated with the electromagnetic wave, and a magnetic belt for passing the functional beads through the flow path by magnetic force, wherein at least one type of biopolymer is fixed on the surface of the functional beads;
 - causing a specific reaction between a first biopolymer and a second biopolymer in the presence of functional beads; and
 - identifying the functional beads based on the specific reaction.
14. (Withdrawn) The functional bead-reading method according to claim 13, wherein the specific reaction is a hybridization reaction, a nucleic acid amplification reaction, or an antigen-antibody reaction.
15. (Withdrawn) A flow cytometer comprising a bead-reading apparatus that includes a flow path to enable functional beads having a coating layer on the surface thereof and having nanoparticles present in the coating layer to pass therethrough; a pair of electrodes provided in the midst of the flow path; a power source to apply a voltage to the electrodes; and a light-receiving element to capture light emitted from the functional beads, to which the voltage has been applied by the electrodes.
16. (Withdrawn) A flow cytometer comprising a bead-reading apparatus that includes a flow path to enable functional beads having a coating layer on the surface thereof and having nanoparticles present in the coating layer to pass therethrough; an electromagnetic wave source provided in the midst of the flow path; and a light-receiving element to capture light emitted from the functional beads, which have been irradiated with the electromagnetic wave.
17. (New) The method for reading beads according to claim 6, wherein the flow path has a width three times or greater a diameter of the bead particle.

18. (New) The method for reading beads according to claim 6, wherein the space between the pair of electrodes is two-third or less a width of the bead particle.